

ENGLISH POLICY



1. Introduction

Language and communication is at the heart of children’s learning. It is central to social and emotional development and is the main instrument of learning across the curriculum. The ability to communicate well gives children the capacity to participate fully in society.

Language develops best in context, when there is a real reason to communicate. This influences our approach to the teaching and learning of English. We believe that children learn best when we start from whole language – a good story, a great film, an exciting science topic, an interesting role play, a piece of drama or a debate. Children who want to know what is in a book will become enthusiastic readers. Children who want their readers to understand and enjoy what they have written will express themselves clearly and imaginatively in writing.

Technology plays a vital role in the way we learn and communicate today and we believe that it should be integral to the teaching and learning of English. We want children to understand how digital media works and to use this to express themselves in language learning. The use of visual resources is embedded in our approach to teaching and learning. It is one of the ways we support our children’s English development and access to the curriculum. We also live in an increasingly visual world, and our children are given the opportunity to develop their visual literacy through analysing a wide range of moving image texts, for example, television, film, and multimedia.

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We also value celebrating children’s writing, which gives children a sense of pride in the work which they produce. We have termly writing awards where teachers choose two pupils who have put exceptional effort into their writing and made good progress across the term

We are aware that the way an adult communicates greatly affects children’s language development – so we model appropriate communication skills. We give children time to communicate and we think about the way we question them, so they have the opportunity to try out new language and express themselves fully.

2. Aims

Through the teaching of English our aims are to ensure that children will:

- Develop a positive attitude towards reading and create a life-long love of a range of literature
- Develop the skills required to progress from decoding to reading with fluency
- Enable students to read for a range of different purposes
- Enable children to approach books and a wide range of texts with confidence
- Respond to, interact with and extract meaning from a wide range of sources
- Take appropriate care and ownership of books
- Experience the pleasure of reading to others and sharing their reading with a wider audience.

- Develop children's ability to orally retell texts and progress to the writing of high quality texts
- Ensure that writing is linked to reading, speaking and listening to give children experiences of all areas of writing.
- Develop children's ability to plan, draft and redraft their writing to produce a polished piece of text across a wide range of genres.
- Be encouraged to develop and extend their vocabulary year on year, utilising the language they learn from reading high quality texts.
- Enable children to write a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, using the appropriate language and sentence structures.
- Be competent in the art of speaking and listening, making presentations, demonstrating to others and participating in debate.

Reading

At Grangetown, we know if a child is able to read fluently and reads widely, a wealth of opportunities are provided for them. As well as aiming to teach children to read fluently with understanding, we hope to instil a love for reading in all children.

At Grangetown we have a multi-layered approach to the teaching of reading:

- In Reception and Key Stage 1 the emphasis is on word reading and a phonic approach to decode quickly and fluently, using the Monster Phonics programme to systematically teach synthetic phonics. .
- Alongside our phonics programme, we teach children how to extract meaning from text (comprehension). We do this through high-quality discussion with adults, using a range of texts and following the guided reading curriculum designed by English leaders.
- When the children have progressed to the end of the Monster Phonics Programme they continue to develop their phonic knowledge, using high-quality texts and teacher-devised activities focussing upon reading, writing, speaking, punctuation and grammar.
- We teach the children the key comprehension strategies of prediction, clarification, asking questions and summarising. Those children at Key Stage 2 have daily guided reading lessons to develop and deepen their understanding of what has been read.
- Children are exposed to a balance of fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts in guided reading, as well as fiction and non-fiction texts across other areas of the curriculum.
- As a whole school, we have daily story times, to help develop the children's love of reading. All classes have high quality libraries within appealing reading areas.
- To support the children's development of reading at home, all children take home a reading scheme book and/or a free choice book from the library.

Writing

At Grangetown, we know that writing is a primary form of communication which children will continue to use throughout their lifetimes, whether this be handwritten or electronically. It not only allows children to express themselves but it is an aspect of English that can also provide children will great enjoyment.

- The teaching of writing is supported by a range of high quality texts which are outlined in the medium term planning document produced by English leaders.
- 'Talk for Writing' is an example of an approach used by teachers. It is an approach to teaching children to be good writers, and we believe that this enables our children to imitate the key language they need for a particular topic/genre of writing orally, rehearsing the tune of the language they need, followed by shared writing to show them how to craft and shape their writing for a particular purpose and audience.
- Spelling is taught every day in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 through the Monster Phonics Programme. It is then woven through daily English lessons.
- Children will experiment and investigate the texts covered using role play, discussion and analysis of features. They will utilise new grammatical features and explore the vocabulary used within the high quality examples.
- Children will write independently using the features which they identified during the reading stage. They are then given the opportunity to edit and redraft their own writing in response to oral feedback

- Children may spend time experimenting with language or participating in drama activities, there is no expectation that there is evidence of these activities within the English books. All of children's written work is recorded in their English book: this may include word work, grammar work or extended pieces of writing.
- As outlined in the National Curriculum, we ensure children have secure basic skills through a structured spelling programme: No Nonsense Spelling. In Key Stage 2, spelling is systematically taught 5 times over a fortnight following the No Nonsense spelling programme. Children are taught strategies for learning statutory word lists and spelling rules to apply in their own writing. Those spellings which have previously been taught but spelt incorrectly in independent written work are highlighted for children to attempt again.

Handwriting

Throughout the school, beginning in reception, children are taught handwriting using the Letter join scheme of work. Letter join is a programme which covers the handwriting requirements in the National Curriculum. A highly detailed and progressive scheme, with a wide range of resources, was chosen to support children with their handwriting journey. Our aim is that handwriting becomes an automatic process that does not interfere with children's creative and mental thinking. Therefore, by the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils should have the ability to produce fluent, legible and speedy handwriting.

Phonics

Early reading and phonics skills are taught from the very beginning of each child's learning journey. Formal phonics begins daily in Reception and continues up until Year 2 and beyond if needed. We use the Monster Phonics scheme which is a highly-engaging, structured, synthetic phonics programme. It accelerates learning by allowing children to learn new graphemes by using monsters to group graphemes for recall and to provide an easy and fun memory cue for children. It also uses colour-coding to highlight the new grapheme. Once taught and secure, the colour is removed.

Spelling

Across Key Stage 2, children have a spelling session which is taught using the No Nonsense Spelling scheme. Following the programme, children are taught 5 spelling sessions over a two week period, from Year 3 to Year 6. No Nonsense Spelling provides a comprehensive progressive scheme which focuses on how to teach strategies, knowledge and other skills pupils need to learn. The programme consists of the requirements of the National Curriculum, which have been organized into strands and then broken down into termly overviews.

3. Whole School Organisation and Management

(i) Planning

- Planning is done with reference to the English Programme of Study in the National curriculum for the teaching of writing genres.
- Planning is also based on formative assessment, so that ongoing gaps in learning can be carefully addressed.
- English leaders have produced a progressive half-termly Medium Term Plan covering a fiction and non-fiction genre each half term, setting out clear grammatical elements linked to the genres being covered. Teachers also use the most recent assessments to plan for gaps in learning or teaching.
- Planning is also based on formative assessment, so that on-going gaps in learning can be carefully addressed.

Genres list years 1-6

ENGLISH OVERVIEW – YEARS 1-6						
	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1	Narrative: Retelling a story with predictable phrases Recount	Narrative: Tell a 3 part story about a central character Instructions	Narrative: Plan and tell a 3 part traditional tale Recount	Narrative: Retell a familiar story in 3 parts Report	Narrative: Retell a complete simple 3 part story Instructions	Narrative: Write own 3 part story based on traditional tale Report
Year 2	Narrative: Retell a 3 part story that has a key central character. Non-Chronological report	Narrative: Retell a traditional tale with repeated events Recount in the 1st person	Narrative: 3 part story based on own experience Instructions	Narrative: Plan and tell a 4 part story Narrative recount	Narrative: Plan and write own four part story Non-Chronological Report	Narrative: Plan and write a familiar story Persuasion
Year 3	Narrative: 4 part story with a clear ending Recount in the form of a diary	Narrative: Writing a story in the 3 rd person Explanation in the form of a 'How to' guide	Narrative: Retell a narrative showing good vs bad. Non-Chronological Report in the style of a travel guide.	Narrative: 5 part story with a clear dilemma Non-Chronological report showing contrast	Narrative: Story with a clear problem and resolution Instructions which can be easily followed	Narrative: Write a story which includes dialogue Persuasive letter
Year 4	Narrative: Write their own version of a familiar story Recount in the form of a letter	Narrative: A story with a well-structured climax and resolution Explanation of how something works	Narrative: Write a story with clear organisational devices Persuasive advertisement	Narrative: Write a story with a clear atmospheric setting A descriptive non-Chronological report	Narrative: Write in role as a character Recount in the form of a formal letter	Narrative: A story with a strong central character A compare and contrast non Chronological report
Year 5	Narrative: A five part narrative with clear links between each section A concise recount in a specific form	Narrative: A narrative which is both tense and humorous A comparative non-chronological report	Narrative: Write in the style of an author A formal persuasive letter	Narrative: Tell a story which explores narrative viewpoint A linear procedural text	Narrative: Write a non-linear story using flashbacks or parallel stories A balanced discussion text	Narrative: A narrative with a clear narrative voice A concise and impersonal explanation text
Year 6	Narrative: A narrative inspired by a playscript Recount in the form of a newspaper	Narrative: Create a distinct atmosphere through story A comparative non-Chronological Report	Narrative: An extended narrative with a powerful descriptive atmosphere A balanced discussion text	Narrative: A historical narrative which conveys factual information A non-chronological report which informs and entertains	Narrative: A narrative with clear distinction between characters A discussion text of a scientific principle	Narrative: A non-linear narrative An explanation text contained within a formal letter

(ii) Time Allocation

English is taught mainly through a daily Literacy lesson; however teachers sometimes choose to block a full morning or afternoon of English depending upon the activity/activities taught. Cross-curricular learning is embedded into the Grangetown curriculum – English is not just a stand-alone subject, but rather it is taught within and through several other curricular areas and teachers reinforce expectations across all curriculum lessons. Guided reading is taught daily for 30 minutes in Key Stage 2 and twice a week, in addition to daily phonics, in Key Stage 1. In KS1 a 30 minute daily Phonic session is taught at the beginning of each day.

(iii) Assessment

In English, short-term assessments are made which we use to help us to adjust our daily lesson plans. These short term assessments are closely matched to the teaching objectives. Teachers complete a feedback sheet which identifies those children who have achieved the objective and those who have misconceptions. A traffic light system is used when marking the children's books. When children are taught a grammatical element or punctuation element in isolation, the children in Key Stage 2 also self-assess using a traffic light system to enable the teacher to gauge the correct level of the children's understanding.

Ongoing, formative assessments are used to measure progress against the key learning objectives, and to help us plan the next steps in teaching and learning. Summatively, children are assessed against assessment statements, as a means of recording and tracking children's progress across that term.

Children in year 2 and 6 are formally tested using the national standard assessment test. Year 1 also undertake the phonics screening check which is a short, simple assessment used to make sure that all pupils have learned phonic decoding to an appropriate standard by the age of 6. If a child does not meet the required standard in Year 1, the check is repeated the following year.

(iv) Reporting to Parents

Each term, parents are invited to the school for a consultation to discuss their child's progress and attainment. Once a year, a written report is sent to parents with a detailed description of their child's progress and effort throughout the year. We also communicate daily to our parents through the use of a 'home-school diary'. On a daily basis, messages can be relayed at the start and end of the school day – a reminder about reading or homework or a quick word of praise.

4. Lesson Management and Organisation of Teaching

(i) Planning

- The 2014 National Curriculum for English is a detailed document, acting as the basis for our Long Term planning
- English leaders have produced a progressive half-termly Medium Term Plan, setting out the planned teaching and learning with clear grammatical elements linked to the genres being covered. Teachers also use the most recent assessments to plan for gaps in learning or teaching.
- Short Term plans or weekly planning includes objectives/skills being taught, details of the activity, outcomes and evaluations of each lesson. Weekly planning is annotated and adjusted according to ongoing formative assessments.

(ii) Special Educational Needs

Provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, whilst still having high expectations for all. The curriculum is differentiated through the use of pupil groupings, levels of adult support, level of challenge, and adapted equipment and resources. Teachers utilize immediate interventions based upon the child's understanding/lack of understanding in lessons (based on formative assessment or marking). The aim of the interventions is to close the gaps in attainment so that SEND children are able to make as much progress as their peers, without gaps widening.

(iii) Differentiation

We provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We have high expectations for all children, and where possible, use scaffolding to support all children in achieving. A range of strategies and activities are used to ensure appropriately levels of challenge. Teacher or teaching assistant support is targeted in different ways: whole class, groups or individuals, depending upon then teacher's planning and also depending upon how the lesson is progressing. In KS1, the children stay as a class where possible and challenge is provided in these sessions. Those children who need extra support access daily phonics in smaller groups as well as targeted interventions and extra practise sessions.

(iv) Equal Opportunities

Provision for English is in line with all of our policies. All children have equal access to the English curriculum and developmentally appropriate materials. Teaching will be differentiated appropriately. Resources etc. are sensitive to the needs and backgrounds of the children and will not reflect gender or cultural stereotypes, and are monitored annually to ensure that sensitivity.

5. The Role of the English Coordinators

(i) The English co-coordinators are responsible for the monitoring and implementation of the English Curriculum, and the management of English resources, as follows:

- take a lead in policy development and the production of a scheme of work designed to ensure progression and continuity throughout the school
- monitor progress in English and advise the Headteacher on any action needed
- support colleagues in their development of detailed work plans and the implementation of the scheme of work and in assessment and record keeping activities
- take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources
- keep up to date with developments in English and disseminate this information to colleagues.

(ii) Monitoring & Evaluation

Monitoring of the taught curriculum, and of standards of pupil learning & achievement, is achieved through observation of lessons, learning walks, scrutiny of books and planning, discussions with children, and through discussion in staff meetings and key stage meetings. For Core Subjects, and for Foundation Subjects which are 'in-focus', the Coordinator is allocated non-contact time, some of which will be employed in observing teaching and learning. A short termly written account of progress is produced by the Coordinator. The Headteacher reports to the Governors Curriculum Committee, as appropriate.

(iii) Organisation of Resources

- Each class teacher has resources stored in the classroom which match the areas to be taught in English
- Each classroom has a resource area where the children can independently find and use resources that will help and support them in English.
- Each classroom has a reading area with books that are appropriate to their level/age. Children and teachers can also access the school library, where there is an extensive range of fiction and non-fiction books.
- Reading books are organised along the corridor, starting from the lowest level to the highest.
- A regular English allocation is devolved each year from school budget for resources. Decisions are made regarding expenditure in consultation with staff and governors. Priorities are established through review of the School Improvement Plan, and through consultation with staff.

6. Additional Information appropriate to this curriculum area

(i) Learning at home

Reading at home is key and this is promoted through learning at home tasks. All children are expected to read a minimum of three times per week at home and are reminded of this on a weekly basis. Weekly spellings or spelling patterns are given, linking to work covered in class that week.

(iv) Eager Readers

An Eager reader initiative was introduced across the school to encourage and motivate children to read more often at home. Children are required to read an appropriate book to an adult for 10-15 minutes (depending on their age) and get their home school diary signed. All classes have an eager reader display which children move up once they have gathered 22 signatures in their diaries. As children reach stage 1,5 or 10 on the eager readers race, they are given a bronze, silver or gold certificate in class.

(v) Special weeks/ days

Special days or weeks are organised throughout the year to promote reading and writing. We celebrate World Book Day each year, when children are given a plain white t-shirt to decorate with their favourite character or book and activities are planned to promote reading. During Book Fair week, reading is celebrated and children come into school with their parents/carers to purchase books. Our children have

worked with many local and national authors. Classes visit local theatres, and we also work with – for example – SAFC, Sunderland Museum, and No Limits Theatre on in-school literacy projects.

(vi) Writing Award

Writing Awards are given termly (two per class), for effort and improvement in writing. This written work is turned into a high profile display in school. The award winners are also given a certificate, a pen/pencil awarded in a whole school assembly.

Nicole Roberts: English Subject Leader

Sarah Hunter: English Subject Leader

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